

# Limericks

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This activity is ideal before moving onto poetry, and lends itself well to creative writing.

Before starting, try and make a game based on rhymes – put one half of the class against the other, getting as many rhymes as possible for a particular word.

# Limericks

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Limericks are like short poems, which are usually funny or strange. They don't tend to be serious.

Today we will be reading some limericks and seeing how they work so well.

*Limericks have a very basic rule – this is, that the first, second and fifth lines each have eight syllables, and rhyme with each other, while the middle lines have only six syllables and a separate rhyme.*

Think of it as AABBA.

## Look at the 2 examples below.

There was a young lady from Niger,  
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.  
They returned from the ride  
With the lady inside,  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

A wonderful bird is the pelican  
His bill can hold more than his belican  
He can take in his beak  
Food enough for a week  
But I'm damned if I see how the helican

## Short Questions

What is interesting about the rhyming pattern?

What happened to the young lady in the first limerick?

If you know what a pelican looks like, try and draw one below.

## Writing a Limerick

Now, to write your own limerick, begin by choosing a **character** and a **place name**.

For example: **a little boy, Fareham**.

Think of some words which rhyme with your place name. Because the limerick is meant to be funny, your rhymes may be silly - for example:

- Sydney
- Kidney
- Didn't he

Use **two** of these words to end the first two lines of your limerick, which introduce your character.

*There was a young man from Sydney  
Who only would eat steak and kidney.*

Next, think of a problem for your character, and present it in your two short lines:

*When the kidney ran out,  
Though he started to shout,*

Finally, finish with a **resolution** (ending) to your limerick, which should make your reader laugh.

*He had to go hungry, didn't he?*

Try this process to write limericks of your own. You will also find there are other ways of beginning your limerick:

- A man with a very large nose . . .
- While traveling one day in Peru . . .
- I was startled one day by a hen . . .